



*Ambassador Hume with the Takalani
HIV/AIDS muppet*

BACKGROUND

As the South African health system changes to increase access to quality health care, especially for historically disadvantaged populations, the U.S. government and private sector play a key role in helping the people of South Africa improve their health. In partnership with the South African government, U.S. government agencies, universities and foundations support the improvement of health services, the expansion of health research and disease surveillance, and the prevention, control and treatment of chronic and infectious diseases.

South Africa is one of the countries most severely affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic. With 25-30% of people of reproductive age infected, 4-6 million individuals are already HIV positive. Life expectancy is expected to drop to 41 years by 2010, if no measures are taken to prolong the lives of those infected. As almost half of HIV infected individuals die of tuberculosis, the dual epidemics are having a serious impact. These HIV-related deaths mean South Africa will have millions of orphans and increasing social and economic disruption.

In response, the South African government has developed a comprehensive plan focused on HIV prevention, care and support and recently announced its intent to address problems that have limited its capacity to provide anti-retroviral drugs to treat AIDS. The U.S. supports these programs and is rapidly expanding its efforts to address HIV/AIDS and other health conditions.

WHAT IS THE U.S. MISSION DOING?

Working with the national and provincial Departments of Health, universities and NGOs to strengthen essential primary health care, disease surveillance and research through:

- Strengthening diagnosis and treatment capacity of tuberculosis (TB) and sexually transmitted infections (STI).
- Providing immunization support.
- Developing sustainable health support systems including laboratory and epidemiological surveillance capacity.
- Helping control diarrheal disease.
- Enhancing child survival and maternal health programs.

Providing \$30 million annually for HIV/AIDS related activities such as:

- Regional program of transmission prevention targeting high-risk mobile populations.
- Multiple research grants to demonstrate sustainability of anti-retroviral treatment, to develop new vaccines, etc.
- Joint efforts to utilize behavioral factors to prevent transmission.
- Programs with organizations doing community-based orphan care/support.
- Training counselors and facilitating voluntary testing.
- Education and public information programs targeting high risk groups/youth.
- Programs to improve diagnosis and treatment of opportunistic infections.
- Preparation, printing and distribution of treatment/care guidelines and manuals.
- Workshops to train care givers and human rights activists.
- Home-based care programs for those infected and affected in poor areas.

Working with U.S. and South African non-governmental organizations to improve public health and expand health care and research capacity.

WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?

- A system for tracking the inventory, availability and distribution of drugs is being expanded nationwide.
- South African scientists have completed essential research on HIV, child nutrition and basic biomedical questions.
- Centers for HIV research excellence established.
- Condoms are widely available, free of charge.
- Peace Corps volunteers have trained educators and communities to reduce risk behavior related to STI and HIV/AIDS, especially among youth.
- The management of sexually transmitted infections has improved through research assessing rapid diagnostic tests and their cost effectiveness.
- A private sector HIV care, support and treatment initiative was launched.
- Industry, labor groups and the military have mounted effective HIV prevention programs.
- Takalani Sesame Street introduced a muppet character living with HIV/AIDS.
- An electronic TB register is now operating in four provinces.
- A 24-hour AIDS helpline is functioning.



Mobile units assist remote communities with basic health care

U.S. FOUNDATIONS FUND HEALTH PROGRAMS IN SOUTH AFRICA

- Kaiser Foundation
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Elisabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation
- Ford Foundation
- Secure the Future Foundation
- Rockefeller Foundation
- Doris Duke Foundation



WHAT'S NEXT?

- Help South African national and provincial health officials implement their strategic TB plans and provide technical support to strengthen health sector support systems.
- Expand efforts to prevent mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS.
- Support efforts to expand AIDS treatment.
- Increase collaborative research and training to address chronic and infectious diseases.
- Encourage more union/business involvement in creating workplace HIV/AIDS policies.
- Train national and provincial HIV/AIDS managers in program management, planning, budgeting and supervision.
- Assess existing Voluntary HIV counseling and testing services and foster their improvement and expansion.
- Develop with South African researchers a computer-based system to manage AIDS treatment.
- Work to improve childhood immunizations and lower instances of diarrhea.



Nurse caring for patients at USAID-assisted rural clinic

USEFUL WEBSITES

USAID:

<http://www.usaid.gov/>

Department of Health and Human Services:

<http://www.os.dhhs.gov/>

National Institutes of Health:

<http://www.nih.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control:

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

Department of State:

<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/global/hiv/>